



TOWN OF BERWYN HEIGHTS

Prince George's County, Maryland

Incorporated in 1896 ~ Sixth Oldest Municipality in PG County

TOWN MEETING MINUTES JULY 9, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Calvo, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Kulpa-Eddy, CMs Dennison, and Rasmussen. CM Schreiber had an excused absence. Also present were Chief of Police Antolik, Treasurer Lape, Clerk Harper, Code Supervisor Simpson and citizens. TA Murphy had an excused absence.

Mayor Calvo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. INTRODUCTION

CM Rasmussen welcomed Kevin Simpson for an introduction as the new Code Supervisor. Mr. Simpson said he is glad to be here. Prior to starting this job, he worked for the City of Mount Rainier for 7 years, first as in parking enforcement and then as a code officer performing inspections and enforcing property maintenance violations. He comes to Berwyn Heights with valuable experience in local government and an appreciation for good customer relations. He thanked Chief Antolik, Mayor Calvo and CM Rasmussen for helping him get oriented on his first day of work and meeting his new colleagues.

Mayor Calvo and CM Rasmussen said they are excited to have him start after almost a year of this position being vacant. They believe his approach of engaging the community and working with property owners to solve problems will be suitable for Berwyn Heights.

2. MINUTES

Clerk Harper read a summary of the June 11 Town meeting minutes. On a motion by MPT Kulpa-Eddy and second by CM Dennison, the minutes were approved 4 to 0.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Lape gave the Treasurer's report for the month of June.

4. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Calvo reported that TA Murphy, who has been recovering from surgery, is expected to return this coming Monday. In his absence, Chief Antolik and Treasurer Lape filled in as Acting Chief Administrator and Acting Chief Financial Officer, respectively. Meeting in executive session on June 16, the Council appointed David Lockley as a full director, who has served as Acting Director of Public Works for the last two years.

Mayor Calvo said this continues to be a very busy summer primarily because he and the Council are still dealing with the aftermath of the June flash flood. In the past, he spent a lot of time helping residents getting their power restored. Normally, residents have to hire a master electrician to ensure that it is safe to turn the power back on; then the County will issue a permit; and finally Pepco is notified to switch the power back on. Every one of these steps costs money. But after many meetings with Prince George's County and Pepco agreed to waive their reconnection fees.

After power was restored to all 12 homes who had it cut off, the recovery moved into the next phase of cleanup and renovation. The Town set up a flood recovery fund where people could donate to help those most affected. So far between \$6,000 - \$7,000 has been collected, a generous sum, but small in comparison to the total cost of renovations. Unfortunately, most of the damage is not covered by home insurance because the homes are not in a flood zone. However, in the future, residents, who live in low-lying areas with a storm water drain nearby, may want to sign up for flood insurance to be covered if such a circumstance recurs.

Mayor Calvo continued that he is scheduling meetings between County agencies and Town staff to learn more about why the storm drain system failed, and encourage residents to give them a chance to ask questions about the County's response to the flooding. It is likely that the Town will continue to deal with County agencies until all homes have been repaired to fully understand the shortcomings of the stormwater system and make improvements where needed.

In other news, Mayor Calvo commended Pepco for their fast response to a widespread power outage on July 3, when a storm blew off the roof of student housing complex on Route 1 and downed many trees. The Town also dealt with another recent utility issue, a water main break on Natasha Drive after WSSC completed repairs that appear to have been inadequate. Chief Antolik initiated conversations with WSSC on applying a better permanent patch. He is following up to learn more about how the County handles permitting for WSSC, and how the Town might initiate an early notification process for planned water and sewer projects.

Mayor Calvo said he met with the Presbyterian Church elders to determine what is needed to get the easement for the 63rd Avenue sidewalk approved. He learned that all deeds and easements have to be approved by the larger Presbytery. This will likely postpone the approval to the end of the summer. TA Murphy has monitored the County permit process for the stormwater management project at the Public Works yard and for the emergency generators. It is hoped the permits will be obtained by September.

Mayor Calvo also had a conversation with County Councilmember Eric Olson about legislation he is sponsoring that allows municipalities to create single family zones around institutions of higher learning, which place limitations on new rental housing. The law would enable the City of College Park and other municipalities housing University of Maryland students to better control the number of rental homes in their communities.

Lastly, Mayor Calvo announced several executive sessions. On June 3 the Council discussed the code supervisor search with a consultant of the Town's search firm. Later interviewed the candidate for code supervisor, Kevin Simpson. On June 16, the Council interviewed Acting Public Works Director Lockley prior to his appointment as full director; and on July 7, the Council discussed and approved the promotion of Officer Paul Roberson to corporal.

5. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Administration: MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that, with the beginning of the new fiscal year, the FY 2014 audit has begun. TA Murphy is expected back in the office next week, and will again be able to guide the Administration Department. She also noted that Comcast Channel 71 has been off the air for a while. A piece of equipment broke during the July 3 power outage and has been shipped out for repair. At the MML conference in June she spoke with some SHA representatives. She learned that the access points for Kenilworth Avenue, including the Pontiac Street intersection, will be repaired after expected completion of bridge and right turn lane widening at Paintbranch Parkway the end of July.

Code Compliance: CM Rasmussen reported that new Code Supervisor Simpson started last Monday with a full day of orientation. The following day, he met with the Council to go over a list of first year goals produced by the Council. Mr. Simpson provided feedback, which he will bring to the next Council worksession for consideration. The final product will function as a work plan for the Code Department in the coming year.

CM Rasmussen said that the Gazette carried an upbeat front page story about one of the flash flood victims the Town was able to help. Thanks to money collected by the Berwyn Heights Police Department, a girl who lost the contents of her bedroom was taken on a shopping spree during which a new bed and clothing were purchased for her. He also noted that the candidate for the District 3 County Council seat was decided by a mere 6 votes at the June 24 primary, with Danielle Turner emerging as the winner.

Parks and Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs: CM Dennison reported that many people turned out for the volunteer appreciation dinner. She thanked all who donated their time and skills volunteering in the community. Upcoming events include the Ice Cream Social on September 12, and the Lake Artemesia Concert on September 27.

Public Health and Safety: Mayor Calvo commended Chief Antolik and his department for helping the family whose daughter's bedroom was flooded. They were appreciative. The good publicity caused more people to donate money to the flood recovery fund.

Chief Antolik said this is what a small community is all about and commended Clerk Carter and Detective Unger for spearheading the police fundraising effort, netted over \$400. The police activity report for June shows 7 Part I offenses, which is somewhat above the 5 year average of 6.4. The year-to-date total was 35, than the 5 year average of 39.2. Berwyn Heights Police also issued 271 State and Town citations and total of 109 speed camera citations. Speed camera location posted on the police website www.berwynheightspd.com.

Chief Antolik reported, thanks to the testimony of Officers Roberson and Thompson, Andrew Kuglar was indicted in the murder of his ex-girlfriend, Amber Sch the first homicide in Berwyn Heights in over 20 years. He is charged with 1st degree murder and 3rd degree burglary and faces life in prison without p Sentencing is set to take place on August 22.

Lastly, Chief Antolik announced that the 31st National Night Out will take place on August 5. This crime and drug prevention program, is designed to raise awareness about crime, strengthen police community partnerships and send a message to criminals that this community is organized and protected. He hopes this year's will be as big as in previous years.

In response to CM Rasmussen, Chief Antolik explained what his officers will do if a car has been parked in the street for more than 3 days without being moved. If a car belongs to a Town resident, the police will try to contact the resident and ask him to move the car. If it belongs to someone other than a Town resident, a 7-day sticker will be applied and a citation issued. Mayor Calvo added that residents may park a legally registered car in front of their own house as long as they pay the sticker. Tickets are only issued if it is parked in front of someone else's house.

Public Works: Mayor Calvo asked residents to be kind to the Public Works employees whose work is more difficult in the summer heat. He commended Di Lockley for devising a good way to fill up the cistern in the new community garden.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Green Team: Mayor Calvo reported that the Green Team has submitted its application for the Sustainable Maryland certification. He thanked staff for helping with the needed documentation together. If the application is approved in time, the award ceremony will take place at the MML fall conference. The Green Team also plans to celebrate a grand opening of the community garden during the harvest season, sometime in September.

Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness: MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that the NW/EP will not have a meeting in August, but will be staff the grills on National Night Out. They look forward to seeing many friendly faces. Another event is in the planning stages for early September.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 7-2014 - Certification of CDBG FY 2015-17 Agreement: Clerk Harper read the Resolution. MPT Kulpa-Eddy moved to adopt it. CM Dennison seconded. Mayor Calvo explained that this agreement essentially allows the Town to opt into the County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. In recent years, the Town has not been eligible for CDBG road repair funds because it does not meet the income threshold. However, it may qualify for certain economic development funds, which might be worth pursuing when the Greenbelt Station development is coming online. With no further comments, the Resolution was approved in a unanimous vote.

9. CITIZENS DISCUSSION

Mayor Calvo commented on the passing of Prince George's County's first African American County Executive, Wayne Curry. He said Curry was a transformative leader when he led the County from 1994 to 2002 and was successful in attracting new businesses and development, starting with a Borders bookstore at Bowie Gateway. As a child, Mr. Curry and his brother were the first to integrate Cheverly Elementary School and later Bladensburg High School. He died of lung cancer in his home on August 2.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*

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